

Southern California Mountains Foundation

My comments in regards to the Restoration (G 14-04-02-R 01) as well as the Education & Safety (G 14-04-02-S 01) grants submitted by this group are as follows:

First off, comments and problems from years past, from what I can see, have not been addressed nor corrected. Therefore, I'm sorry to say I don't expect them to be address and/or corrected this year either. Alas, still hoping for change regarding MY green sticker funds.

2012 comments for this particular group - http://ohv.parks.ca.gov/?page_id=27105

2013 comments for this particular group - http://ohv.parks.ca.gov/?page_id=27373

2014 comments for this particular group - http://ohv.parks.ca.gov/?page_id=27752

(from 2014, Jenny Wilder was a character on an '80s TV Show – not a REAL person)

Restoration

This group is asking for green sticker funds to provide salaries to staff for their program when it seems no other group seeks anything even remotely resembling this. An Education Outreach Coordinator (Program Director?) to the tune of 49 thousand, six-hundred and ten dollars a year seems quite outlandish in my opinion when they already have submitted requests to fund other staff over the years. A 40-hour work week would come to an amount just shy of 2000 hours for a calendar year. Therefore, why have they asked for 3000 plus hours for such a position? How would this relate to overtime in regards to labor laws? This does not add up. What have we gotten for our money thus far?

A few simple questions were posed to SBNF paid staff in attendance by Mr. Waldheim at a grant seminar public forum held at the SBNF Supervisors Office just a few weeks ago. The Education Outreach Coordinator (again, other SCMF websites list this person as a Program Director – which is it?) was not in attendance. This person has NOT been in attendance of this type of meeting for over six months and has been reported to be on disability. Where have the monies (\$48,000 last year) gone is this person is truly collecting disability? I'm left scratching my head with OHV program issues left unaddressed. Other organizations submitting grants do far more with less of our money: a fact supported by the content of every other grant submission posted to this public site. The positions of education outreach coordinator and volunteer coordinator should be combined for a total of 30 hours a week as this would seem more sensible given the strained resource funds available for this year.

Volunteers have reportedly donated over 28 thousand hours in 2013 but only 9500 over this last fiscal year... what happened? Yet, the program is asking for our tax dollars to fund an OHV Patrol Volunteer Coordinator and another similar position within restoration project – (THREE YEARS OF SALARIES in a one year grant) amounting to over 165 thousand dollars. Again, another submission that looks to be quite excessive when it seems the Adopt-A-Trail program volunteers does a great majority of these very same duties... and virtually at no cost to the green sticker funds as far as I can tell. The volunteer hours submitted for the match appear to be inflated – quite possible that an audit is in order.

Education & Safety

In my opinion, this issue is of the most importance as with more proper education of the OHV public comes less resource damage... at least one would hope for as much. They state their program is open to the public yet there is no internet forum available to the general OHV public for sake of transparency. This should be mandatory for any organization requesting public funds. Otherwise, this should be deemed a private "members-only" club in the eyes of the OHMVR and

not subject to receiving public funds for closed functions and/or meetings. Are all members of the public welcome to their monthly "general membership" meeting? The Adopt-A-Trail OHV has been practicing this aspect at their meetings thus far so this should be practiced in regards to this group as well. Transparency should be a strong and lasting requirement.

A request for 18 thousand dollars just last year for a mobile kiosk was far fetched at best – yet it was fully funded. After all, is this for education or recruitment? This amount would be better served as going toward education in schools and other community area events. Two years ago, a total of 24 visits to local schools had been submitted yet last year that number has lessened to just over half of that (15). This year – NONE? Why the reduction in education? Again, this should be paramount.

This brings me to the issue of just under 11 thousand dollars for mileage. Why such an exorbitant figure has been submitted is beyond me. Any other agency would be requesting 14 cents a mile so why do they feel worthy of 55 cents a mile? Further, they are requesting 2400 dollars for admission to trade shows and other promoter-sanctioned events. I am currently involved with various off-road non-profits and our group has attended four shows which were also attended by the SBNFA plus four others they were not present for. We have yet to pay a single dime for a group such as ours who promotes responsible off-road use and education. Therefore, why the 2400 dollars for JUST TWO EVENTS?

In the categories of brochures and signs, there are requesting much more money than would ever seem prudent. 25 thousand dollars seems over the top for one calendar year (was 20 thousand last year). Just two years ago, they did quite well with 8 thousand minus the match and did just fine by all accounts. Simply place this information on line and let the public choose to print pertinent information as needed.

In years past, I had made strenuous attempts to show support for this applicant. After thorough review of this application, just as was done last year, I am yet again sorry to say I cannot "NOT" support their funding for either the restoration or the education & safety grants as submitted.

Lastly, the SCMF openly "recruits" for new members for their base at trade shows AND at organized dual sport rides put on by TRUE non-profit groups such as Big Bear Trail Riders, Orange County Dualies, among others. The aforementioned groups that put on these rides pay a great amount of FEES to the San Bernardino Natl Forest in the form of a Special Use Permit. The SCMF Volunteers are ill-informed by their leadership that they can participate in these rides FOR FREE... a vast majority of FS OHV Volunteers not paying a dime to the worthy charities for which these organized rides are to benefit. These dual sport groups mentioned above contributed THOUSANDS OF HOURS to the Adopt-A-Trail program by way of trail maintenance and promotion of the SBNF OHV Trail System at various off-road shows and other events throughout Southern California. Can't the SBNF repay the favor by foregoing these fees? These funds should be going to the worthwhile charities that need them most... THE KIDS FIGHTING CANCER - NOT TO A GOV'T AGENCY!

In closing, it must be noted that most of the volunteers have, within their hearts, the wish to do a world of good for my beloved San Bernardino National Forest off-road trail system. They have demonstrated this factor to varying extents over the 15+ years of their existence. Though over the last two years or so has seen a measurable lessening of their member base and subsequent divergence from the intended message of its founders, they still manage to hold on. This being said, the fact remains that our state has reduced the funds available in regards to the education category. From 2.3 million available just two years ago to 1 million last year and 1.5 million available funds this year for the entire state, this Grant applicant is AGAIN asking for over 5% of the available funds. Such provisions awards may deny others of much needed assistance. I believe it would be best for the available funds to be shared more evenly throughout all the Grant applicants. [Dan Simmerman]